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Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 SAM-01 /068 W
---------- 030626
R 312350Z JUL 75
FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 728
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PP
SUBJ: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DELETES ENTIRE SECTION ON
CHAPTER SEVEN FROM CONSTITUTION

1. JULY 31 LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THAT AFTER NEARLY THREE HOURS OF DEBATE ON PROVINCIAL GOVT PROVISIONS THE CHIEF MINISTER MOVED TO OMIT THE ENTIRE CHAPTER ON PROVINCIAL GOVT FROM THE CONSTITUTION. THE MOVE WAS APPROVED 40 TO 19.

2. BOTH THE CHIEF MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (WHO IS ALSO MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVINCIAL GOVT) MR. EBIA OLEWALE TOLD MEMBERS THAT PNG COULD NOT AFFORD PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS. THE CHIEF MINISTER NOTED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GRANT WAS BEING CUT EACH YEAR AND WOULD END IN FIVE YEARS. OLEWALE ESTIMATED THE COST FOR PROVINCIAL GOVT FOR PNG OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WOULD TOTAL $A15 MILLION, AND CONCLUDED "WE DO NOT HAVE THIS KIND OF MONEY AT THIS STAGE." EARLIER IN THE DEBATE HE HAD OBSERVED THAT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WOULD CAUSE MASSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS WITH EACH PROVINCE TAKING UP
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DIFFERENT POWERS AT DIFFERENT TIMES. OLEWALE CALLED

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UPON LOCAL LEVEL LEADERS TO BUILD UP FROM THE VILLAGE LEVEL TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES BEFORE BRINGING IN SOMETHING NEW LIKE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

3. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS SOMARE'S MOVE CAME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO MOST MEMBERS, AND THE NATIONAL PRESSURE GROUP REPS LATER SAID THEY HAD BEEN DISGUSTED AT THE "SECRET AND UNDEMOCRATIC" WAY THE CHANGE HAD BEEN MADE.

4. COMMENT: SOMARE'S PATIENCE, COUPLED WITH SURPRISE TACTICS HAVE YIELDED HIM A STUNNING TACTICAL PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY WHICH WILL HAVE IMPORTANT LONG TERM BENEFITS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

5. SPEAKER PNG HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY BARRY HOLLOWAY INFORMED POLOFF SOMARE DECIDED DELETE PROVINCIAL GOVT PROVISIONS AT SMALL LUNCHEON HELD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE JULY 30. IN SAME AFTERNOON HE MADE EXTEMPORANEOUS APPEAL TO MEMBERS OF HOUSE AND WAS SUCCESSFUL IN CONVINCING THEM THAT PNG HAD NEITHER FUNDS NOR ADMINISTRATIVE CADRES TO IMPLEMENT FULL PROVINCIAL GOVT SCHEME AT THIS TIME. HE WAS SUPPORTED BY MAJORITY OF UNITED PARTY AND MANY NATIONAL PRESSURE GROUP MHA'S WERE ABSENT.

6. BASICALLY HOLLOWAY BELIEVES DIFFICULTIES WHICH WOULD ARISE IF SCHEME IMPLEMENTED FINALLY HAVE BECOME SO OBVIOUS THAT MOST MEMBERS READY TO ABANDON IDEA OF ENTRENCHING SCHEME IN CONSTITUTION IN FAVOR MORE AD HOC APPROACH.

7. SPEAKER BELIEVES SOMARE'S MOVE WILL HAVE SOME DIS-AGREEABLE SHORT TERM FALLOUT FROM NATIONAL PRESSURE GROUP, BUT CONSIDERS THIS TO BE MUCH MORE DESIRABLE THAN PROLONGED POLITICAL ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE DRAIN ON PNG RESOURCES WHICH ESTABLISHMENT OF PROVINCIAL GOVT SYSTEMS WOULD HAVE CAUSED.

8. SOMARE HAS OFFERED PUT PROVINCIAL GOVT SCHEME IN ORDINARY LEGISLATION WITH PROVISO IT WOULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ESTABLISHED IN AREAS WHERE LOCAL INITIATIVE MADE PROVINCIAL GOVT BOTH FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE.

9. SOMARE IS MUSING OVER POSSIBILITY OF ABOLISHING BOUGAINVILLE PROVINCIAL GOVT AS ESTABLISHED UNDER JULY 1974 INTERIM BOUGAINVILLE PROVINCIAL GOVT ACT, BUT HAS MADE NO MOVE TO DO SO YET.

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10. THE BPG STRIPPED OF ITS POTENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL
FOUNDATION IS IN A MUCH WEAKENED BARGAINING POSITION
AS A RESULT OF SOMARE'S LEGISLATIVE COUP. LOGICALLY
IT SHOULD NOW MOVE TOWARDS AN ACCOMODATION WITH THE GPNG.
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